

1. Aura and Halo in Theravāda Buddhism

In the Commentary to *Udānapāli* 6.9. *Upātidhāvanti* we learn that the Buddha has an aura and halo¹ shining in six colors (blue/brown, yellow, red, white, dark red, and brilliant),² from His body to the extent of six feet.

*"Nanu ca bhagavato byāmapabbhā pakatiyā byāmamattappadesaṃ abhibyāpetvā candimasūriyālokaṃ abhibhavitvā ghanabahalaṃ buddhālokaṃ vissajjenti andhakāraṃ vidhamitvā tiṭṭhati, kāyappabhāpi nīlapītādivasena chabbaṇṇaḥṇanabuddharasmiyo vissajjetvā pakatiyāva samantato asītihaṭṭhappadesaṃ obhāsentī tiṭṭhati, evaṃ **buddhālokeneva** ekobhāsabhūte bhagavato nisinnokāse padīpakaraṇe kiccaṃ natthīti?"³*

"Isn't it (so) that the shine (spreading as far as) a fathom⁴ is naturally greatly shining over the area of one fathom, surpassing the light of the moon (and) sun as the **Buddha's light** is sent forth in density and stays dispelling darkness; (furthermore, that) just the **shine of the body** sends forth blue/brown, yellow, etc., six-colored dense **Buddha's rays**, and (the body therefore) naturally stays shining all over the area of eighty cubits⁵, (and therefore) there (would) be no necessity to light (any) candles in the space where the Exalted One is sitting thus, shining Himself simply by the **Buddha's light**?"

I have found five different words used for "aura" in the Pāli texts. See them below together with the number how many times they occur in the commentarial literature. Unfortunately, none of them appears in the original *Tiṭṭhaka*, the oldest strata of the texts.

No.	Pāli term	English translation	Number of occurrences in the commentarial and post-canonical literature
1.	<i>kāyappabhā</i>	"bodily shine"	3 times
2.	<i>sarīrappabhā</i>	"corporeal shine"	101 times
3.	<i>buddhāloko</i>	"Buddha's light"	10 times
4.	<i>ketumālā</i>	"rays-garland"	18 times
5.	<i>buddharasmiyo</i>	"Buddha's rays"	41 times

Aura in Pāli texts is mentioned only for the Buddha and deities. It is never mentioned for the disciples of the Buddha or any other living beings. Could this be because the aura of the Buddha and deities was visible by all/most of human beings? See also the story of the brahmin Candābha, whose bellybutton (navel) shine was visible by all/most of human beings as well.

¹ aura is the light around the body, halo is the light around the head only.

² The colors are given differently in English sources. I follow the Pāli sources and the officially accepted Burmese translation.

³ *Khuddaka Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā – Udāna – 6. Jaccandhavagga - 9. Upātidhāvantisuttavaṇṇanā – par.59.*

⁴ Six feet or 1.8 meters.

⁵ Forty years or ca. 37 meters.

XXVI. 30. Elder Moonlight⁶

This religious instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to Elder Moonlight, Candābha. The story from beginning to end is as follows:

30 a. Story of the Past: A forester presents a moon-disk

In times long past, a certain merchant living at Benāres said one day to himself, "I will go to the frontier and get me some sandalwood." So taking a large supply of garments, ornaments, and the like, he went to the border with five hundred carts, and halting for the night at the gate of a village, inquired of some youthful cowherds in the forest, "Is there any in this village who is a forester?" {4.188} "There is." "What is his name?" "So-and-so." "What is the name of his wife, and what are the names of his children?" "So-and-so." "In what place is his house situated?" "In such-and-such a place." The merchant followed the directions given him by the cowherds, seated himself in a comfortable carriage, went to the door of the forester's house, alighted from the carriage, entered the house, and inquired for that woman, mentioning such and such a name.

The woman thought to herself, "It must be some kinsman of ours." So she came quickly and provided him with a seat. The merchant sat down there, and mentioning the name of her husband, inquired after him, saying, "Where is my friend?" "Master, he has gone to the forest." "My son So-and-so and my daughter So-and-so, where are they?" Thus did he make inquiries after all the members of the family, mentioning the name of each individual. Having so done, he presented to them all of those garments and ornaments, saying, "When my friend returns from the forest, pray give him too this garment and this ornament." The woman bestowed high honor on the merchant, and when her husband returned from the forest, said to him, "Husband, the moment this visitor arrived, he mentioned the name of each member of the family and gave this and that." The forester rendered the merchant the courtesies which were his due.

In the evening, as the merchant lay on his couch, he asked the forester, "Friend, as you have walked about the foot of the mountain, have you ever seen much of anything?" "Nothing except that {4.189} I have seen a good many trees with red branches." "Many trees?" "Yes, a good many." "Well then, show them to us." So the merchant accompanied the forester to the foot of the mountain, cut down a large number of red sandalwood trees, and filled therewith his five hundred carts. On the way back the merchant said to the forester, "Friend, [30.305] my home is at Benāres, in such-and-such a place; pray come to see me from time to time." Then he added, "There is no present I should so appreciate as red-branched trees; pray bring me these and these alone." "Very well," replied the forester. From time to time he went to see the merchant, carrying with him only red sandalwood. In return the merchant gave the forester a large amount of money.

⁶ Copy-pasted from *"Buddhist Legends, Dhammapada Commentary Vol. III"*, E.W. Burlingame, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1921 – proof-read and digitized by Anandajoti Bhikkhu in 2015; pp.337-340 (PDF pp.338-341). (I have removed the references and footnotes, because they are not relevant here.)

Subsequently the Buddha Kassapa passed into Nibbāna, and a golden shrine was set up over his relics. Then that forester took a large supply of sandalwood and came to Benāres. His friend the merchant caused a large quantity of sandalwood to be ground to powder, and filling a dish with the powder, said to the forester, "Come, friend, while the rice is cooking, we can go to the place where the shrine is building and return." And taking the forester with him, he went to the shrine and rendered honor to the relics of the Buddha with the sandalwood powder. His friend the forester, who lived on the frontier, made a moon-disk out of sandalwood and placed it within the shrine. Such was his former deed.

30 b. Story of the Present: Brahman Moonlight

Having passed out of that state of existence, he was reborn in the World of the Gods, and after spending the single interval between Kassapa and Gotama Buddha in that state, he was reborn in the dispensation of the present Buddha in the city of Rājagaha in the household of a wealthy Brahman. From the circle of his navel proceeded forth a light like that of the moon's disk, and therefore they gave him the name Moonlight, Candābha. This, we are told, was the result of his making a moon-disk and placing it within the shrine. The Brahmans thought to themselves, "If we take him with us, we can make the whole world our prey." Accordingly they seated him in a carriage and took him about with them. And to everyone they met they said, "Whosoever shall stroke the body of this Brahman with his hand, such-and-such power and glory shall he receive." People would give a hundred pieces of money, or a thousand pieces of money, and thus receive the privilege of stroking the body of the Brahman with their hand. Traveling thus from place to place, they finally came to Sāvatti and took lodgings between the city and the monastery.

Now at Sāvatti five crores of Noble Disciples gave alms before breakfast; and after breakfast, bearing in their hands perfumes, garlands, garments, and medicaments, went to hear the Law. When the [30.306] Brahmans saw them, they asked them, "Where are you going?" "To the Teacher to hear the Law." "Come! What will you gain by going there? There is no supernatural power like the supernatural power possessed by our Brahman Moonlight: they that but stroke his body, receive such and such power and glory; come have a look at him." "What does the supernatural power of your Brahman amount to? It is our Teacher alone who possesses great supernatural power." And straightway they fell to arguing, but each of the two parties was unsuccessful in its efforts to convince the other. Finally the Brahmans said, "Let us go to the monastery and find out whether it is our Moonlight or your Teacher that possesses the greater supernatural power." And taking him with them, they set out for the monastery.

The Teacher, even as Moonlight approached him, caused the moonlight to disappear. The result was that when Moonlight stood in the presence of the Teacher, he resembled nothing so much as a crow in a basket of charcoal. The Brahmans took him one side, and immediately the radiance reappeared, bright as ever. Again they brought him into the presence of the Teacher, and straightway the radiance disappeared, just as it had the first time. When Moonlight went for the third time into the presence of the Teacher and observed that the radiance disappeared, he thought to himself, "Without a doubt this man knows a charm by which he can make this radiance disappear." So he asked the Teacher, "Is it not a fact that you know a charm by which you can make this radiance of mine disappear?" "Yes, I know such a charm." "Well then, impart it to me." "It cannot be imparted to one who has not retired from the world." Thereupon Moonlight said to his fellow Brahmans, "As soon as I learn this charm, I shall be the foremost man in all the Land of the Rose-

apple. You remain right here and I will retire from the world and in but a few days learn this charm." So he asked the Teacher to admit him to the Order, retired from the world, and subsequently was admitted to full membership in the Order. The Teacher taught him the Formula of Meditation which consists of the Thirty-two Constituent Parts of the Body. "What is this?" asked Candābha. "This is something which you must repeat as a preliminary to acquiring this charm," replied the Teacher.

From time to time the Brahmins came to him and asked, "Have you learned the charm yet?" "Not yet, but I am learning it." In but a few days he attained Arahantship. When the Brahmins came and asked him again, he made answer, "Depart ye! now have I reached the state of one who will never return." The monks reported the matter to the Tathāgata, saying, "Reverend Sir, this Brahmin says what is not true, utters falsehood." Said the Teacher, "Monks, worldly joy has been extinguished for my son; he speaks the truth." So saying, he pronounced the following Stanza,

413. He that is spotless as the moon, pure, serene, and clear, He in whom the essence of joy is extinct, such a man I call a Brahman.

See what is the explanation of the *Suttanipāṭa* Commentary, which is supposed to be compiled by the same author as was the commentary to Dhammapada presented above, namely ven. Buddhaghosa.

Pāli Commentary to the <i>Suddhaṭṭhaka Sutta</i> ⁷	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>bhagavā ca tasmim samaye dhammasabhāyaṃ varabuddhāsane nisinnova hoti.</i>	At that time, The Exalted One was also just sitting on the Seat of the Great Buddha, in the Dhamma hall.
<i>candābho bhagavantaṃ upasaṅkamma madhurapaṭisanthāraṃ katvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi,</i>	The (Brahmin) Candābha approached the Exalted One, and after friendly welcome (he) sat at one side.
<i>tāvadeva cassa so āloko antarahito. buddhālokassa hi samīpe asītihatthabbhantare añño āloko nābhibhoti.</i>	At that moment also his (i.e. Candābha's) light disappeared. ⁸ Indeed, in the vicinity of the Buddha's light, inside eighty cubits (in diameter) all other light does not shine.
<i>so "āloko me naṭṭho"ti nisīditvāva uṭṭhāsi, uṭṭhahitvā ca gantumāraddho.</i>	He (thought) "my light is destroyed" and stood up from sitting, and as (he) stood up (he) wanted to leave.

⁷ *Suttanipāṭa-Aṭṭhakathā – 4. Aṭṭhakavagga – 4. Suddhaṭṭhakasuttavaṇṇanā*

⁸ According to the "*Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*", Candābha "belonged to a wealthy brahmin family of Rājagaha and was called Candābha because from the circle of his navel proceeded a light resembling that of the moon's disk. When he grew up, the brahmins seated him in a carriage and took him about, proclaiming that whoever stroked his body would receive power and glory. By this means they earned much money."

<i>atha naṃ aññataro puriso āha — "kiṃ bho candābha, samaṇassa gotamassa bhīto gacchasi"ti.</i>	Then another man told him: "What, friend Candābha, are you leaving from the ascetic Gotama because of fear?"
<i>nāhaṃ bhīto gacchāmi, apica me imassa tejena āloko na sampajjatīti punadeva bhagavato purato nisīditvā pādatalā paṭṭhāya yāva kesaggā rūparaṃsilakkhaṇādisampattiṃ disvā</i>	"I do not leave because of fear, however, by His power my light does not shine forth (/ "prosper")." (Candābha) however sat again in front of the Exalted One, and as (he) saw the wealth (of the Buddha's) bodily rays (shining forth) from the soles of (His) feet until the ends of (His) hair, (as well as the Buddha's) characteristics (of Great Man) etc.,
<i>"mahesakkho samaṇo gotamo, mama ure appamattako āloko uṭṭhito, tāvatakenapi maṃ gahetvā brāhmaṇā sakalajambudīpaṃ vicaranti.</i>	(and thought:) "The ascetic Gotama is certainly of great power. (When) a little light arose from my belly, just by that much brahmins took (me) and drove me around whole Jambudīpa (i.e. India).
<i>evaṃ varalakkhaṇasampattisamannāgatassa samaṇassa gotamassa neva māno uppanno,</i>	(Even though,) to the ascetic Gotama endowed with such wealth of great characteristics, there is no conceit arisen.
<i>addhā ayaṃ anomaguṇasamannāgato bhavissati satthā devamanussānaṃ"ti</i>	Trully, this (One) is endowed with superior qualities (then me), the teacher of gods and men."
<i>ativīya pasannacitto bhagavantaṃ vanditvā pabbajjaṃ yāci.</i>	Immensely impressed, (Candābha) bowed down to the Exalted One and asked (Him) to be ordained (as a monk).

See below translation of several examples where the Buddha's aura and halo are mentioned:

Pāli Commentary to the <i>Rāhulavatthukathā</i>⁹	Translation by monk Saraṇa¹⁰
<i>"ayyo kira siddhatthakumāro piṇḍāya caratī"ti catubhūmakādīsu pāsādesu sīhapañjaraṃ vivaritvā mahājano dassanabyāvaṇṇo ahoṣi.</i>	"Indeed, the lord Prince Siddhattha is walking on alms-round!" the people of four-storeyed etc. palaces opened the window(s) and watched.

⁹ *Vinaya Piṭaka Aṭṭhakathā 4 - 1. Mahākhandaḥ - Rāhulavatthukathā - para. 7*

¹⁰ Translated with help of Sayadaw Ashin Janakābhivamsa's "*Mahawā Bhāṭhā-Ṭīkā*" [မဟာဝါဘာသာဇီကာ] (i.e. verbatim Pāli-Burmese translation of *Vinaya Piṭaka's Mahāvaggapāli*), Vol. 1, New Burma Piṭaka Offset Printers [နယူးဘားမားအေ့စ်ဆက်ပိဋကပုံနှိပ်တိုက်], Amarapura, (year of publishing is not mentioned); pp.193-194.

<i>rāhulamātāpi devī "ayyaputto kira imasmiṃyeva nagare mahatā rājānubhāvena suvaṇṇasivikādīhi vicarivā</i>	Even the princess ("goddess"), the mother of Rāhula (the son of Siddhattha), (thought) "The lord, the son, indeed moved about in this very town pompously, in golden palanquine etc.,
<i>idāni kesamassuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyavatthavasano kapālahattho piṇḍāya carati,</i>	(but) now (He) is walking on alms-round, with shaven head, wearing saffron robes, begging-bowl in hands.
<i>"sobhati nu kho no vā"ti sīhapañjaraṃ vivarivā</i>	"Splendid, isn't (He)?" (and the princess) opened the window,
<i>olokayamānā bhagavantaṃ nānāviraḡasamujjalāya sarīrappabhāya nagaravīthiyo obhāsetvā buddhasiriyā virocamānaṃ disvā</i>	And as (she) observed the Exalted One, (she) saw (Him) resplended by dazzling bodily shine ¹¹ , illuminating the streets of the city, brilliant by the Buddha's grace,
<i>uñhīsaṭo paṭṭhāya yāva pādatalā naraśihagāthāhi nāma aṭṭhahi gāthāhi abhitthavitvā</i>	(she) eulogized (the Buddha) by eight verses called "Verses on the Lord Lion" (describing the Buddha) from (His) forehead whorl until the soles of (His) feet,
<i>rañño santikaṃ gantvā "tumhākaṃ putto piṇḍāya caratī"ti rañño ārocesi.</i>	And (then the princess) approached the king and informed the king: "your son is walking on alms-round."

Pāli Commentary to the <i>Mahāpadāna Sutta</i> ¹²	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>rasmivemattaṃ nāma maṅgalassa bhagavato sarīrarasmi dasasahassilokadhātupparamāṇā ahoṣi.</i>	The distinction of rays, that (in the case of) the Exalted One Maṅgala, was that (His) bodily rays were of the length of ten thousand world systems.
<i>amhākaṃ bhagavato samantā byāmamattā.</i>	(The rays) of our Exalted One were one fathom (long) by all directions.
<i>tatra rasmivemattaṃ ajjhāsayappaṭibaddhaṃ, yo yattakaṃ icchatī, tassa tattakaṃ sarīrappabhā pharati.</i>	There the distinction of rays is dependent on the intention – as much as one wishes, that much the bodily shine will pervade (that person).
<i>maṅgalassa pana niccampi dasasahassilokadhātum pharatūti ajjhāsayo ahoṣi. paṭividdhaguṇesu pana kassaci vemattaṃ nāma natthi.</i>	However, the intention (of the Maṅgala Buddha was that) the (rays) of the Maṅgala (Buddha) will continuously pervade all the ten thousand world systems. However, there was no distinction (in the Buddhas) in the qualities of wisdom ("understanding"). ¹³

¹¹ *nānāviraḡasamujjalāya* is translated by Ashin Janakābhivaṃsa as "အမျိုးမျိုးသော စွဲမက်ဖွယ်တို့ဖြင့် တောက်ပသော" ("shining by various attractions"), perhaps taking "vi" as emphasizing the "rāga", instead of the common usage where "virāga" means "non-lust".

¹² *Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā 2 - 1. Mahāpadānasuttavaṇṇanā - Sambahulaparicchedavaṇṇanā - para. 17*

¹³ The intention here is to say, that the Buddha Gotama also had rays ten thousand world systems long, but He didn't have the intention to make them that much pervasive as wished the Buddha Maṅgala.

Pāli Commentary to <i>Avassutapariyāya Sutta</i> ¹⁴	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Athassa puratthimakāyato suvaṇṇavaṇṇā rasmi utṭhahitvā asītihaṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ aggahesi</i>	Then the golden rays (of the Buddha Gotama) rose from the front of (His) body to the length ("took the place") of eighty cubits.
<i>pacchima-kāyato, dakkhiṇaḥatthato, vāmaḥatthato suvaṇṇavaṇṇā rasmi utṭhahitvā asītihaṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ aggahesi.</i>	From the back of (His) body, from the right hand, (as well as) from (His) left hand rose golden rays to the length ("place") of eighty cubits.
<i>Upaṇi kesantato paṭṭhāya sabbakesāvaṭṭhehi moragīvavaṇṇā rasmi utṭhahitvā gaganatale asītihaṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ aggahesi.</i>	From above the (Buddha's) hair, from all of the hair-curls, rose rays of peacock's neck color to the length ("took the place") of eighty cubits, in the surface of the sky.
<i>Heṭṭhā pādālehi pavāḷavaṇṇā rasmi utṭhahitvā ghanapathaviṃ asītihaṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ aggahesi.</i>	From below the soles of (the Buddha's) feet rose rays resembling corals to the length ("took the place") of eighty cubits.
<i>Evaṃ samantā asītihaṭṭhaṭṭhānaṃ chabbaṇṇā buddharasmiyo vijjotamānā vipphandamānā</i>	Thus the Buddha's rays of six colors, shining (and) writhing to the length ("place") of eighty cubits in all directions,
<i>kañcanaḍaḍḍipikāhi niccharitvā ākāsaṃ pakkhandajālā viya cātuddīpikamahāmeghato nikkhantavijjulatā viya vidhāviṃsu.</i>	Emanating from golden torches, roamed about in the sky like when throwing nets, (or) like the lightning coming from the great clouds of all the Four Islands. ¹⁵
<i>Sabbadisābhāgā suvaṇṇacampakapupphēhi vikiriyaṃānā viya,</i>	As if adorning all directions with golden blooms of the champac tree,
<i>suvaṇṇaghaṭato nikkhantasuvaṇṇarasadhārāhi siñcamānā viya,</i>	As if pouring perfumes ("escaping") from a golden pot,
<i>pasāritasuvaṇṇapaṭaparikkhattā viya,</i>	As if encircled by stretched golden cloths,
<i>verambhavātasamuṭṭhitakiṃsukakaṇikāra pupphacuṇṇasamokiṇṇā viya vipabhāsīṃsu.</i>	As if sprinkling the powder of Butea frondosa (and) Petrospermum acerifolium flower powder attached by the Verambha monsoon wind, (thus the Buddha's rays) shone forth.

Pāli Commentary to <i>Kasibhāradvāja Sutta</i> ¹⁶	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>atha manussā bhuñjantā ca kasantā ca sabbakiccāni pahāya</i>	Then the people, (although) eating (or) ploughing, stopped all (their) works,

¹⁴ *Samyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā 4.1.4.4.6(243). Avassutapariyāyasuttavaṇṇanā*

¹⁵ It is believed that the human realm is divided into four "islands", a concept reminiscent of today's "continents".

¹⁶ *Samyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā 1 - 7. Brāhmaṇasaṃyuttaṃ - 2. Upāsakavaggo - 1. Kasibhāradvājasuttavaṇṇanā - para. 15*

<i>asītiyanubyañjanaparivāraṃ dvattiṃsamahāpurisalakkhaṇapaṭimaṇḍitaṃ sarīraṃ</i>	And when (they) saw the (Buddha's) body adorned with the complete eighty lesser marks (and) the thirty-two (greater) marks of Great Man,
<i>byāmapabbhāparikkhepavibhūṣitaṃ bāhuyugalaṃ jaṇḍamaṃ viya padumasaraṃ,</i>	Shining a shine all around a fathom in diameter, of both hands, movable, like a lotus-pond,
<i>rasmijālasamujjalitātārāgaṇamiva gaganatalaṃ,</i>	The surface of sky with numerous stars brightened by (the Buddha's) net of rays,
<i>vijjulatāvinaddhamiva ca kanakasikharaṃ siriyā jalamānaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ ekamantaṃ ṭhitaṃ disvā</i>	The Rightly and Thoroughly Awakened One standing on one side, illuminating from (His) head (like) writhing lightnings or ("and") the top of a golden mountain,
<i>hatthapāde dhovitvā añjaliṃ paggayha samparivāretvā aṭṭhaṃsu.</i>	Washed (their) hands (and) feet, kept (their straightened) fingers (above their head) and assembled around (the Buddha).

Pāli Commentary to <i>Aññāsikoṇḍaññatthera Vatthu</i> ¹⁷	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>buddhānaṃ dharamānakāle sarīrappabhā dvādasayojanikaṃ phari,</i>	When the Buddha's were alive, their bodily shine pervaded twelve yojanas,
<i>parinibbutānaṃ pana tesaṃ rasmi nikkhamitvā samantā yojanasataṃ avatthari.</i>	However to those who attained the complete cessation (of aggregates), the rays went forth and pervaded hundred yojanas to all directions. ¹⁸

Pāli Sub-Commentary to <i>Tatiyaśaṅgītikathā</i> ¹⁹	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Vimalaketumālāti ettha "ketumālā nāma sīsato nikkhamitvā upari muddhani puñño hutvā dissamānarasmirāsīti vadanti.</i>	"Perfect garland of rays", there (Elders) say (that) "garland of rays, that comes forth from the head, and making ("being") a heap above the head (it is) a number of visible rays."
<i>"Muddhani majjhe paññāyamāno unnatappadesotipi vadantīti tīsupi gaṇṭhipadesu vuttaṃ.</i>	In all three <i>gaṇṭhipadas</i> ("gloss-books") is said "(Elders) say that (there was) recognized high area in the middle of the top of the head." ²⁰

¹⁷ *Āṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā 1 - 14. Etadaggavaggo - (14) 1. Paṭhamaetadaggavaggo - Aññāsikoṇḍaññattheravattu - para. 9*

¹⁸ I suppose the intention here is not to tell the exact measure of the ray-length, but rather to show that that the rays were shining even after the death (*Parinibbāna*, the Complete Cessation) of the Buddhas, even more than during their life. The number here is not important, because there is no mention of what was the situation when the shine was that long.

¹⁹ *Vinaya Piṭaka Tīkā – Bāhiraṇidānakathā - Tatiyaśaṅgītikathāvaṇṇanā - para. 65*

²⁰ I.e. the shine that came forth of the Buddha had apparently spherical shape, resembling to a mound above the top of the Buddha's head.

Pāli Sub-Commentary to <i>Sekha Sutta</i> ²¹	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Buddhānaṃ kāyappabhā nāma pakatiyā asītihatthamattameva padesaṃ pharati āha –</i>	(The Elder) said that as for the bodily shine of Buddhas, (it) pervades the area of eighty cubits:
<i>"asītihatthaṭṭhānaṃ aggaheṣī" ti nīlapītalohitodātamaññijīṭṭhapabhassarānaṃ vasena chabbaṇṇā buddharasmiyo.</i>	"Reaching the distance (/ "Taking the place") of eighty cubits", the six-colored rays of the Buddha are (apparent) as blue/brown, yellow, red, white, dark red, and brilliant.

Pāli Sub-Commentary to <i>Pukkusamallaputta Vatthu</i> ²²	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Thero ca tāvadeva taṃ singīvaṇṇaṃ maṭṭhadussaṃ bhagavato upanāmesi</i>	Then the elder brought the smoothed cloth of golden color to the Exalted One:
<i>"paṭiggaṇhatu me bhante bhagavā imaṃ maṭṭhadussaṃ, taṃ mamassa dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāyā" ti.</i>	"Lord, may the Exalted One accept this smoothed cloth from me, which (would be) for welfare and happiness for me for a long time."
<i>Paṭiggahesi bhagavā, paṭiggahetvāva naṃ paribhuñji</i> .	The Exalted One accepted, and after accepting (it, the Buddha) made use (of it).
<i>Tena vuttaṃ "bhagavāpi tato ekaṃ nivāsesi, ekaṃ pāruripi" ti.</i>	Therefore it is said: "Indeed, the Exalted One then put on one (as the under-robe) and one (as the upper-robe)."
<i>Tāvadeva kira taṃ bhikkhū ovaṭṭikaraṇamattena tunnakammaṃ niṭṭhāpetvā therassa upanesuṃ, thero bhagavato upanāmesi.</i>	In fact, the monks just asked (somebody) only to do the needle-work for the patching, and then brought (the robes) to the elder. The elder then brought it to the Exalted One.
<i>Hataccikaṃ viyāti paṭihatappabhaṃ, viya-saddo nipātamattaṃ.</i>	"As if smothered flames" (means) the countered shine, the word "as if" is just a particle.
<i>Bhagavato hi sarīrappabhāhi abhibhuyyamānā tassa vatthayugassa pabhassaratā nāhosi.</i>	Indeed, being surpassed by the shine of the Exalted One's bodily, there was no brilliance in that pair of robes. ²³
<i>Antantenevāti anto anto eva, abbhantarato evāti attho.</i>	"Simply (from) inside" (means) just inside, that is simply the meaning of "simply from within".
<i>Tenāha "bahipanassa pabhā natthī" ti.</i>	Therefore (the elder) said "however, there was no shine outside." ²⁴

²¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* *Ṭīkā* – *Majjhima Paṇṇāsaka* - 1. *Gahapativaggo* - 3. *Sekhasuttavaṇṇanā* - para. 5

²² *Dīgha Nikāya* *Ṭīkā* 2 - 3. *Mahāparinibbānasuttavaṇṇanā* - *Pukkusamallaputtavattuvavaṇṇanā* - para. 5

²³ The original text of the *Dīgha Nikāya* however seems to speak about the color of the Buddha's skin, rather than about "shine" in the sense of aura. See Walshe's translation of the original text: "Soon after Pukkusa had gone, Ānanda, having arranged one set of the golden robes on the body of the Lord, observed that against the Lord's body it appeared dulled. And he said: 'It is wonderful, Lord, it is marvellous how clear and bright the Lord's skin appears! It looks even brighter than the golden robes in which it is clothed.' 'Just so, Ānanda. There are two occasions on which the Tathāgata's skin appears especially clear and bright. Which are they? One is the night in which the Tathāgata gains supreme enlightenment, the other is the night when he attains the Nibbāna-element without remainder at his final passing. On these two occasions the Tathāgata's skin appears especially clear and bright.'" (From *"Thus Have I Heard, The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Dīgha Nikāya"*, M. Walshe, Wisdom Publications, London, 1987; p.258 (PDF p.129).

²⁴ This is the explanation of the Pāli Commentary. The Pāli Commentary explains: *Hataccikaṃ viyāti yathā hatacciko arigāro antanteneva jotati, bahi panassa pabhā natthi, evaṃ bahi paṭicchannappabhaṃ hutvā khāyatīti attho.* = "As if smothered flames" (means) (just) like when a coal is smothered and glows only inside, and (/ "however") outside it there is no shine, in that (same) way is meant (/ "the meaning of") (the sentence) "it seemed as if the outer shine (of

Pāli Sub-Commentary to <i>Saṅgīti Sutta</i> ²⁵	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Samantapāsādikoti samantato sabbabhāgena pasādāvaho cāturiyaso.</i>	"Thoroughly pleasing" (means) thoroughly by all ways creating faith, gracious.
<i>"Asīhatthaṃ thānaṃ gaṇhātī" 'ti idaṃ buddhānaṃ kāyappabhāya pakatiyā asīhatthe thāne abhibyāpanato vuttaṃ.</i>	"Takes place in eighty cubits" (means) this is said because the Buddhas' bodily shine naturally spreads to the places (even) eighty cubits (far).
<i>Iddhānubhāvena pana anantaṃ aparimāṇaṃ thānaṃ vijjotateva.</i>	However, (the Buddha's shine) illuminates place(s) without limit, without measure when (intended so) by the psychic power (of the Buddha).
<i>Nilapītalohitodātamaññaṭṭhapabhassaravasena chabbaṇṇā.</i>	(The rays) are six-colored, namely blue/brown, yellow, red, white, dark red, (and) brilliant.
<i>Sabbe disābhāgāti sarīrappabhāya bāhullato vuttaṃ.</i>	"To all directions" is said (because of) the abundance of the (Buddha's) bodily shine.

Aura of Deities

Pāli Commentary to <i>Mahānidāna Sutta</i> ²⁶	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>subhakiṇhāti subhena okiṇṇā vikiṇṇā, subhena sarīrappabhāvaṇṇena ekagghanāti attho.</i>	"Covered by pleasure" (has the) meaning of covered (and) strewn with pleasure, united with pleasurable bodily shining color.
<i>etesañhi ābhassarānaṃ viya na chijjivā chijjivā pabhā gacchati.</i>	Of theirs, unlike for the Ābhassaras, the shine does come forth without interruptions. ²⁷

Pāli Commentary to <i>Janavasabha Sutta</i> ²⁸	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>devānubhāvanti yā sā sabbadevatānaṃ vatthālāṇkāravimānasarīrānaṃ pabhā dvādasa yojanāni pharati.</i>	"The power of the deities" (means) whatever is the shine of the clothes, adornment, palaces, and bodies of all the deities, it pervades twelve yojanas (in distance).
<i>mahāpuññānaṃ pana sarīrappabhā yojanasataṃ pharati. taṃ devānubhāvaṃ atikkamivā.</i>	However, for those of great merits, the shine of (their) bodies pervades a hundred yojanas. That surpasses the power of (other) deities.

the clothes) was covered". <- i.e. the Buddha's bodily shine surpassed the shine of the robes. If examined closely, the robes would be recognized as shining, but because the Buddha's bodily shine was so strong, the robes would seem to be just glowing, without any real shine.

²⁵ *Dīgha Nikāya Tīkā 3 - 10. Saṅgītisuttavaṇṇanā - Ubbhatakanavasandhāgāraṇṇanā - para. 3*

²⁶ *Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā 2 - 2. Mahānidānasuttavaṇṇanā - Sattaviññāṇaṭṭhitivaṇṇanā - para. 12*

²⁷ Ābhassaras are *brahmās* of the second *jhāna* world, and their shine is interrupted, shining in flashes. The *Subhakiṇhas* are *brahmās* of the third *jhāna* world, and their shine is uninterrupted, steady.

²⁸ *Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā 2 - 5. Janavasabhasuttavaṇṇanā - Devasabhāvaṇṇanā - para. 4*

Pāḷi Sub-Commentary to <i>Samacitta Vagga</i> ²⁹	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Vaṇṇavantatāya ceva dīghāyukatāya ca brahmapārisajjādīhi mahanto brahmāti mahābrahmā.</i>	The "Brahmā" is great by the immense beauty, long life-span, and the Brahma's retinue, (hence he is known as) the Great Brahmā.
<i>Tassa parisāyaṃ bhavā paricārikāti brahmapārisajjā.</i>	Of his the Brahma's retinue (is so called) because of (their) being the crowd of servants (of the Brahmā).
<i>Tasseva purohitaṭṭhāne ṭhitāti brahmapurohitā.</i>	Of his, indeed, because (they) stay at the position of ministers, (they are called) Brahma's ministers.
<i>Ābhassarehi parittā ābhā etesanti parittābhā.</i>	Of the <i>Ābhassarās</i> , the minor illumination is (therefore called) their "minor illumination".
<i>Appamāṇā ābhā etesanti appamāṇābhā.</i>	Endless illumination is (therefore called) "endless illumination".
<i>Dīpikāya acci viya etesaṃ sarīrato ābhā chijjivā chijjivā patantī viya sarati vissaratīti ābhassarā, yathāvuttappabhāya ābhāsanasilā vā ābhassarā.</i>	Like in the column of oil-lamps, the illumination of their body is interrupted and as if it fell. (They are called) <i>Ābhassarā</i> because (they) remember (<i>sarati</i>) and forget (<i>vissarati</i>), ³⁰ or (they are called) <i>Ābhassarā</i> because they have the habit of radiating in the way mentioned (above).
<i>Subhāti sobhanā pabhā.</i>	"Pleasurable" (means) of gracious illumination.
<i>Subhāti hi ekagghanā niccalā sarīrābhā vuccati, sā parittā subhā etesanti parittasubhā.</i>	"Pleasurable" indeed is said (because their) bodily illumination is unshaken (/steady), (and if) it is lesser pleasure, then theirs is the "lesser pleasure".
<i>Appamāṇā subhā etesanti appamāṇasubhā.</i>	(If it is) endless pleasure, then theirs is the "endless pleasure".
<i>Subhena okiṇṇā vikiṇṇā, subhena sarīrappabhāvaṇṇena ekagghanā suvaṇṇamañjūsāya ṭhapitasampajjalitakañcanapiṇḍasassirikāti subhakiṇṇā.</i>	Covered and strewn with pleasure, united with the pleasure (and) bodily illuminating color, (they are called) "covered in pleasure" (because they are) resplendent (like) a lump of blazing gold kept in a golden casket.
<i>Tattha sobhanāya pabhāya kiṇṇā subhākiṇṇāti vattabbe bhā-saddassa rassattaṃ antima ṇa-kārassa ha-kārañca katvā "subhakiṇhā" ti vuttaṃ.</i>	There it should be said that (they are called) " <i>Subhākiṇṇā</i> " because (they) are covered in illumination, (and) it is said that in order to make the word short, <i>bhā</i> (is made into <i>bha</i>), and (for) <i>ṇa</i> is made <i>ha</i> (i.e. aspiration), hence (creating the word) " <i>Subhakiṇhā</i> ".

²⁹ *Anguttara Nikāya Tīkā 2 - 1. Paṭhamapaṇṇāsakaṃ - 4. Samacittavaggavaṇṇanā - para. 10*

³⁰ The *brahmās* of the second *jhāna* world, the *Ābhassarās*, have the characteristic of being aware of their joy for a while and then forgetting that they are joyful. This way they are aware and not aware of their joy time and again.

More info and links regarding the halo and aura of the Buddha:

<https://buddhism.stackexchange.com/questions/10207/halo-on-the-buddha>

More info about the Buddha's appearance:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_characteristics_of_the_Buddha

2. Hells in *Theravāda* Buddhism

In Theravāda Buddhism there are 8 main hells, so called "Great Hells". Namely:

1. *Saṅḅhava* (Revival) – the hell-beings there are cut in pieces and then reassembled. The cause of rebirth here is (A) wronging against or insulting good persons who live according to Dhamma;³¹ as well as (B) killing living beings.³²
2. *Kālasutta* (Black Thread) – hacked (by adzes) along a marking while lying on a blazing floor. The cause is (A) disrespectful, physical harming or torturing Enlightened persons, greed for material gain, physical harming one's parents; (B) telling lies.
3. *Sarighāta* (Crusher) – dug in the ground and crushed under rolling mountain(s). According to Raschid al-Din's "Life and Teaching of Buddha", this hell is for those who (A) killing living beings or other misdeeds; (C) kill animals.³³
4. *Dhūmaroruva/Roruva* (Net-Cry/Cry) – potash smoke is inserted into the nine bodily orifices. The cause is (A) deliberately committing a misdeed; (B) theft.
5. *Jālaroruva/Mahāroruva* (Smoke-Cry/Great Cry) – Blazing nets are inserted through their bodies. The cause is (A) wronging those accomplished in morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), or wisdom (*paññā*) and other wrong deeds; (B) sexual misconduct.
6. *Tāpana/Cullatāpana* (Roster/Lesser Roaster) - sitting motionless on long blazing iron spikes. The cause is (A) disrespect and insolent behavior toward one's husband;³⁴ (B) drinking alcohol, intoxication.
7. *Mahātāpana* (Great Roaster) - beaten by blazing weapons, standing on blazing iron mountains and falling head-down on blazing iron spikes. The cause is (A) distributing property to monks etc. in wrong manner – with greed, fear, hatred, or delusion, as well as rude behavior toward one's husband.

³¹ This is the cause given by Sarpe Yay-yint Sartee Phwet. From here onward it will be marked by "(A)".

³² This is the cause given by a Tibetan translation of certain Theravadin scripture. See more info in JPTS 1993 vol. XIX, pp.121-123. From here onward it will be marked by "(B)".

³³ This information about the cause for birth in this hell I found in Raschid al-Din's "Life and Teaching of Buddha", p.liii.

³⁴ According to this explanation, it seems that there are only women in this hell.

8. *Avīci* (Gapless) – Suffering is experienced without any pause due to the blazing nets pierced through the body.³⁵ The causes for rebirth in *Avīci* are especially (A) killing one's father (patricide), killing one's mother (matricide), killing an Arahant (a fully Enlightened person), injuring the Buddha (note that it is not possible to kill the Buddha), and splitting the Community of Monks, *Saṅgha* (which would be possible only for monks).

In the appendices to "Pilgrim Kamanita",³⁶ a Buddhist novel edited by ven. Ajahn Amaro, I have found exact times for the suffering in each of the eight hells. These times do not contain the source, and might not be correct. Also, Buddhist scriptures usually do not provide us with large numbers of this extent, so it is possible that it is counted according to certain similes.

No.	Hell Name	Life-Span	Length of one day and night
1.	<i>Sañjīva</i> (Reviving)	500 hell-years	9,000,000 human years
2.	<i>Kālasutta</i> (Black-Thread)	1000 hell-years	36,000,000 human years
3.	<i>Saṅghāta</i> (Crusher)	2000 hell-years	144,000,000 human years
4.	<i>Roruva</i> (Cry)	4000 hell-years	576,000,000,000 human years
5.	<i>Mahāroruva</i> (Great Cry)	8000 hell-years	2,304,000,000 human years
6.	<i>Tāpana</i> (Roaster)	16,000 hell-years	9,216,000,000 human years
7.	<i>Mahātāpana</i> (Great Roaster)	"many kalpas"	"several kalpas"
8.	<i>Mahā Avīci</i> (Great Gapless)	"incalculable"	"incalculable"

See these pictures of the eight Great Hells. 01, 02, 03, 04, and 06 are from Yat-Taw-Mu Maha Bodhi Tahtaung Phayar in Monywa, Sagaing Hills, and the other are courtesy of Ma Snow Aye.



01 *Sañjīva*



02 *Kālasutta*

³⁵ It might seem, that *Avīci* (Gapless) is just a characteristic of the *Jālaroruva* hell. However, it should be distinguished from them by the syntax and the style of literary expression which points to it as a separate hell. Also note, that in the Commentarial account *Avīci* is mentioned in the sixth place, followed by *Tāpana* and *Mahātāpana*. That has been taken for granted by I.V. Put in his paper "The Names of Buddhist Hells in East Asian Buddhism" in the book "Pacific World", pp.209-210, who believes that the concept of the first six hells has been invented as the counterpart for the six sensual-pleasure heavens, and then the *Tāpana* and *Mahātāpana* were added to mirror the *Rūpa* and *Arūpa* Brahma worlds. This is yet another example of "rush identification" and "hasty differentiation."

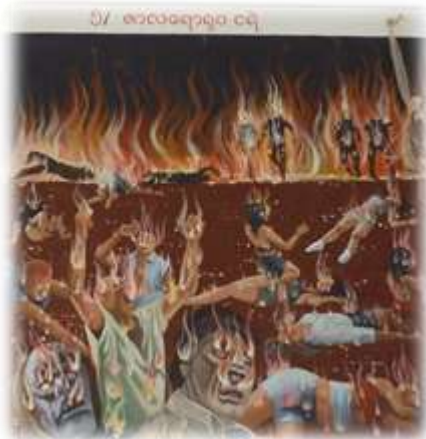
³⁶ See the exact reference below, in "Sources and Further Reading" subchapter.



03 Sarighāta



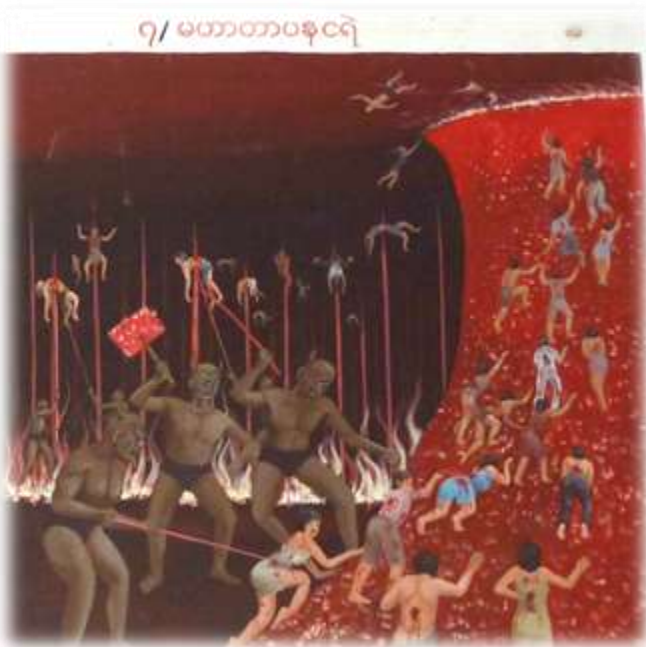
04 Dhūmaroruva



05 Jālaroruva



06 Tāpana



07 Mahātāpana



08 Mahā Avīci

See below E.B. Cowell's translation of the relevant verses in *Jātka 530. Saṃkicca Jātaka* and my translation of its Pāli Commentary.

<i>Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā 530. Saṃkiccatātakavaṇṇanā</i>	E.B. Cowell ³⁷
82. "Adhammacārino rāja, narā visamajjivino; Yaṃ gatim pecca gacchanti, niraye te suṇohi me.	Men that transgress the law, sire, and live unrighteously, what fate they suffer after death in hell, now hear from me.
83. "Sañjīvo kālasutto ca, saṅghāto dve ca roruvā; Athāparo mahāvīci, tāpano ca patāpano.	Sañjīva, Kālasutta and Roruva, great and small, Saṅghāta, Great Avīci, are names that may well appal. With Tapana and Patāpana, eight major hells, in all.
84. "Iccete aṭṭha nirayā, akkhātā duratikkamā; Ākiṇṇā luddakammehi, paccekā soḷasussadā.	Escape from hence is hopeless, and of Ussadas they tell, twice eight times more in number, a kind of minor hell-
85. "Kadariyatāpanā ghorā, accimanto mahabbhayā; Lomahaṃsanarūpā ca, bhesmā paṭibhayā dukhā.	Dread flames here torture sinful men, all cruel deeds abound, horror, amazement, anguish, woe and terror reign around.
86. "Catukkaṇṇā catudvārā, vibhattā bhāgaso mitā; Ayopākārapariyantā, ayasā paṭikujjitā.	Four-angled with fourfold doors is each, in due proportion spaced, with dome of iron overarched, by iron wall embraced.
87. "Tesaṃ ayomayā bhūmi, jalitā tejasā yutā; Samantā yojanasataṃ, phuṭā tiṭṭhanti sabbadā.	Its base of iron wrought is such no raging flame may melt, though even a hundred leagues around its mighty power is felt.
88. "Ete patanti niraye, uddhamṇāpādā avaṃsirā; Isīnaṃ ativattāro, saññatānaṃ tapassinaṃ.	All that have outrage done to saints or injured holy men fall headlong into hell's abyss, no more to rise again.
89. "Te bhūnahuno paccanti, macchā bilakatā yathā; Saṃvacchare asaṅkheyye, narā kibbisakārino.	In evil plight their mangled frames, piece-meal like fish on toast, for their misdeeds through countless years in hell are doomed to roast.
90. "Ḍayhamānena gattena, niccaṃ santarabāhiraṃ; Nirayā nādhigacchanti, dvāraṃ nikkhamanesino.	Their limbs consumed with burning heat, to torture dread a prey, though eager to escape from hell they never find a way.
91. "Puratthimena dhāvanti, tato dhāvanti pacchato; Uttarenapi dhāvanti, tato dhāvanti dakkhiṇaṃ; Yaṃ yañhi dvāraṃ gacchanti, taṃ tadeva pidhiyare.	Seeking an outlet to and fro to east or west they fly, or baffled hurry north or south, a hopeless quest to ply, for gods are there to bar the way, whichever door they try.

Pāli Commentaries	Translation by monk Saraṇa
<i>Tesaṃ vacanattho – nirayapālehi pajjalitāni nānāvudhāni gahetvā</i>	The word-meaning of those (words) – (The hell) is (called) "Sañjīva" ("Revival"), because the wardens of the hell take

³⁷ "The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births", vol.5, E.B. Cowell, Cambridge University Press Warehouse, London, 1905; p.137.

<i>khaṇḍākhaṇḍikaṃ chinnā hīraṃ hīraṃ katā nerayikasattā punappunaṃ sañjīvanti etthāti sañjīvo.</i>	various blazing weapons, (and after they) cut the (suffering beings in the hell) into pieces, (and) then into strands, (those) beings of hell are then enlivened (by those pieces reassembled).
<i>Nirayapālā punappunaṃ nadantā vaggantā pajjalitāni nānāvudhāni gahetvā jalitāya lohaphaviyaṃ nerayike satte aparāparaṃ anubandhitvā paharivā</i>	The hell wardens repeatedly berate (and) chase (after the hell-beings), take various blazing weapons, bind the hell-beings several times on the flaming metal floor, beat (them),
<i>jalitaphaviyaṃ patite jalitakālasuttaṃ pātetvā jalitapharasuṃ gahetvā sayaṃ unnadantā mahantena aṭṭassarena viravante aṭṭhaṃse soḷasaṃse karontā ettha tacchantīti kālasutto.</i>	Drop a flaming (wood-measuring) black-thread that fell on the flaming floor, take a flaming axe, and shouting themselves, (they) hack (/chop) those (hell-beings) that scream by a great scream of pain ("making (them)") into eight (or) sixteen pieces, (hence this hell) is (called) <i>Kālasutta</i> , "Black Thread".
<i>Mahantā jalitaayapabbatā ghātentī etthāti saṅghāto.</i>	(The hell-beings) are crushed by a great flaming iron mountain, (the hell) is therefore (called) <i>Saṅghāta</i> ("Crusher").
<i>Tattha kira satte navayojanāya jalitāya ayapathaviyā yāva kaṭṭo pavesetvā niccale karonti.</i>	Indeed, there (the hell wardens) insert the (hell-)beings in the flaming iron floor (stretching) nine yojanas ³⁸ and fix (them in it).
<i>Atha puratthimato jalito ayapabbato samuṭṭhāya asanī viya viravanto āgantvā te satte saṇhakarāṇiyaṃ tile pisanto viya gantvā pacchimadisāya tiṭṭhati,</i>	Then, the blazing iron mountain rises up, coming from the east, crying like a thunder, rolling over (/coming (toward")) the (hell-)beings like when sesamum seed is crushed (by a rolling pin) and stops at the western side.
<i>pacchimadisato samuṭṭhitopi tattheva gantvā puratthimadisāya tiṭṭhati.</i>	Rising up from the wesatern side, it rolls (/goes") in the same way (over the hell-beings) and stops at the eastern side.
<i>Dve pana ekato samāgantvā ucchuyante ucchukhaṇḍāni viya pīlenti.</i>	(Sometimes) however two get together and squash (the hell-beings) like when the sugar-cane sticks are (crushed) in a sugar-mill.
<i>Evaṃ tattha bahūni vassasatasahassāni dukkhaṃ anubhonti.</i>	Thus (the hell-beings) experience suffering there for hundreds of thousands of years.
<i>Dve ca roruvāti jālaroruvo, dhūmaroruvo cāti dve.</i>	Two (hells of) crying are (known) as <i>Jālaroruva</i> ("Net-Cry"), then <i>Dhūmaroruva</i> ("Smoke-Cry") are also two (hells of) crying.
<i>Tattha jālaroruvo kappena saṇṭhitāhi rattalohajālāhi puṇṇo, dhūmaroruvo khāradhūmena puṇṇo.</i>	There the net-crying (hell) is filled with red brass nettings settled (there) during one aeon, the smoke-crying (hell) is filled with potash smoke.

³⁸ One *yojana* is as long as a bullock-cart can travel during one day, i.e. ca. 11-13 or 20.5 km (7/8 miles, or 12 miles 5 furlongs and 540 feet).

<i>Tesu jālaroruve paccantānaṃ navahi vaṇṇamukhehi jālā pavisitvā sarīraṃ dahanti,</i>	Into them, cooked in the net-crying (hell), there are inserted nets through (their) nine skin-orifices, ³⁹ which burn the body (of each hell-being).
<i>dhūmaroruve paccantānaṃ navahi vaṇamukhehi khāradhūmo pavisitvā piṭṭhaṃ viya sarīraṃ sedeti.</i>	Into those cooked in the smoke-crying (hell), there is potash-smoke inserted to (their) nine skin-orifices and steams (their) bodies like flour.
<i>Ubhayatthapi paccantā sattā mahāvīraṃ viravantīti dvepi "roruvā"ti vuttā.</i>	Because in both cases the cooked (hell-)beings cry a great cry, both are called <i>Roruva</i> ("(hells of) crying").
<i>Jālānaṃ vā paccanasattānaṃ vā tesam dukkhassa vā vīci antaraṃ natthi etthāti avīci, mahanto avīci mahāvīci.</i>	Because either in the netting or in the suffering of those cooked beings there is no gap/pause, it is (called) <i>avīci</i> (Gapless/Pause-Less (hell)), <i>mahanto avīci</i> (Greatly Pause-Less (/Gap-Less)), <i>mahāvīci</i> (Great Pause-Less (hell)).
<i>Tattha hi puratthimādīhi bhittīhi jālā utṭhahitvā pacchimādīsu paṭihaññati, tā ca bhittiyo vinivijjhivā purato yojanasataṃ gaṇhāti.</i>	There nets rise from the eastern etc. walls and struck against those in the west etc.; those walls then strike through and take forth hundred yojanas.
<i>Heṭṭhā utṭhitā jālā upari paṭihaññati, upari utṭhitā heṭṭhā paṭihaññati.</i>	The nets that arose from below strike above, (and the nets) that arose from above strike below.
<i>Evam tāvettha jālānaṃ vīci nāma natthi.</i>	Thus there, indeed, is no gap (between) the nets.
<i>Tassa pana anto yojanasataṃ ṭhānaṃ khīravallipiṭṭhassa pūritanāli viya sattehi niraṇṭaraṃ pūritaṃ catūhi iriyāpathehi paccantānaṃ sattānaṃ pamāṇaṃ natthi,</i>	However, in that place of hundred yojanas there is no space (/ "measure") for the beings in (any) of the four postures, that continuously fill (that space) like a tube filled with powder of Indian kudzu. ⁴⁰
<i>na ca aññamaññaṃ byābādhehi, sakaṭṭhāneyeva paccanti.</i>	Also, they do not obstruct one another, being cooked only in their own place.
<i>Evamettha sattānaṃ vīci nāma natthi.</i>	Thus there is no gap (between) the (hell-)beings.
<i>Yathā pana jivhagge cha madhubindūni sattamassa tambalohabinduno anudahanabalavatāya abbohārikāni honti,</i>	Just like when six drops of honey on the tip of (one's) tongue are negligible (when) a drop of (melted) copper (is added on that tongue),
<i>tathā tattha anudahanabalavatāya sesā cha akusalavipākupekkaḥ abbohārikā honti, dukkhameva niraṇṭaraṃ paññāyati.</i>	In the same way there (in the hell) the remaining six (kinds of) equanimity toward retribution of unskillful (deed) are negligible, (the hell-beings) uninterruptedly experience just suffering.
<i>Evamettha dukkhassa vīci nāma natthi.</i>	Thus there is no pause in the suffering.

³⁹ i.e. two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, one urinary opening, and one faecal discharge. (Note that in Pāli scriptures woman's vagina and urinary opening are both taken as one only, perhaps to simplify the cross-gender explanations.)

⁴⁰ *khīravalli* does is not to be found in PTS dictionary. The Pāli-Burmese dictionary translates it as ဥမုန့် [umonn], which is translated by the Myanmar-English Dictionary (distributed by Myanmar Ministry of Education) as "*Pueraria tuberosa*" and explained as a kind of creeper with edible root. "*Catalogue of Life: 2016 Annual Checklist*" contains *Pueraria tuberosa* together with its synonym "*Hedysarum tuberosum*" and the English common name "Indian Kudzu".

<i>Svāyaṃ saha bhittihi vikkhambhato aṭṭhārasādhikatiyojanasato,</i>	Thus, together with the walls, (the hell reaches) three-hundred plus eighteen yojanas in diameter,
<i>āvaṭṭato pana catupaṇṇāsādhikanavayojanasato, saha ussadehi dasa yojanasahassāni.</i>	Therefore nine-hundred plus fifty-four yojanas in circumference, and ten-thousand yojanas together with the "extreme" (hells).
<i>Evamassa mahantatā vedītabbā.</i>	It's greatness should be known thus.
<i>Niccale satte tapatīti tāpano.</i>	Because (the hell) roasts motionless beings, (it is called) the <i>Tāpana</i> ("Roaster").
<i>Ativiya tāpetīti patāpano.</i>	Because it roasts immensely, it is (called) the <i>Patāpana</i> ("Great Roaster").
<i>Tattha tāpanasmim tāva satte tālakkhandhappamāṇe jalitaayasūle nisīdāpentī.</i>	There in the Roaster (the hell-wardens) make those (hell-)beings sit even on the blazing iron spikes as long as a trunk of a palm-tree.
<i>Tato heṭṭhā pathavī jalatī, sūlāni jalantī, sattā jalantī.</i>	From then onward the ground from below is blazing, the spikes are blazing, (and) the (hell-)beings are blazing.
<i>Evaṃ so nirayo niccale satte tapatī.</i>	Thus the fire roasts motionless beings.
<i>Itarasmim pana nibbattasatte jalantehi āvudhehi paharivā jalitaṃ ayapabbataṃ āropenti.</i>	The beings born in the other (i.e. Great Roaster), however, are beaten by blazing weapons and kept on a blazing iron mountain.
<i>Tesaṃ pabbatamatthake ṭhitakāle kammaṃ paccayo vāto paharati.</i>	As they are staying at the top of the (iron) mountain, by the cause of (their previous) <i>kamma</i> , a wind blows (on them).
<i>Te tattha saṇṭhātuṃ asakkontā uddhampādā adhosirā patanti.</i>	Unable to stay there, they fall (from the mountain) heels upward, head down.
<i>Atha heṭṭhā ayapathavito jalitāni ayasūlāni uṭṭhahanti.</i>	Then blazing iron spikes rise up from the iron floor below.
<i>Te tāni matthakeneva paharivā tesu vinividdhasarīrā jalantā paccanti.</i>	They (i.e. the hell-beings) simply fall on ("beat") those (spikes) by head and get cooked as they are burned (having the spikes) piercing through (their) bodies.
<i>Evamesa ativiya tāpetīti.</i>	Thus it (i.e. the Great Roaster) roasts immensely.
<i>Bodhisatto pana ete niraye dassento paṭhamam saṅjīvaṃ dassetvā tattha paccante nerayikasatte disvā.</i>	The Bodhisatta, therefore, when explaining hells, having seen the hell-beings cooked there (in the Revival Hell), explained first the Revival (Hell).
<i>mahājanassa mahābhaye uppanne taṃ antaradhāpetvā puna pathaviṃ dvidhā katvā kālasuttaṃ dassesi, tatthapi paccamāne satte disvā mahājanassa mahābhaye uppanne tampi antaradhāpesīti evaṃ paṭipāṭiyā dassesi</i>	When the great fear arose in the crowd of people ("great people"), (the Bodhisatta) removed (that fear), split the earth in two and showed the Black Thread (Hell). When the crowd of people ("great people") saw the beings cooked there, a great fear arose in (them) again, and (the Bodhisatta) again removed it. Thus (the Bodhisatta) gradually explained (the hells).
<i>Tato rājānaṃ āmantetvā, "mahārāja, tayā imesu aṭṭhasu mahānirayesu paccamāne</i>	Then, addressing the king, (the Bodhisatta) said: "Great king, having seen the beings cooked in the eight Great Hells, it is appropriate to be diligent."

<i>satte disvā appamādaṃ kātuṃ vaṭṭati</i> ” <i>ti vatvā</i>	
<i>puna tesaññeva mahānirayānaṃ kiccaṃ kathetuṃ</i> ” <i>iccete</i> ” <i>tiādimāha</i> .	Then, in order to explain the duties of the Great Hells, the Bodhisatta said "they are namely..."
<i>Tattha akkhātāti mayā ca tuyhaṃ kathitā, porāṇakehi ca kathitāyeva</i> .	There "being said by me and told by you" was then told (/added) by the Elders of past time. ⁴¹
<i>Ākiṇṇāti paripuṇṇā</i> .	"Strewn over" (means) filled.
<i>Paccekaṃ soḷasussadāti etesaṃ nirayānaṃ ekekassa catūsu dvāresu ekekaṃmiṃ cattāro cattāro katvā soḷasa soḷasa ussadanirayāti sabbepi sataṃ aṭṭhavīsati ca ussadanirayā aṭṭha ca mahānirayāti chattiṃsanirayasataṃ</i> .	The separate sixteen Extreme (Hells) (are counted this way:) four doors of each (Great) Hell (lead to an Extreme Hell), of which each has (/ "has made") four (doors) to (yet another Extreme Hells) each. Thus (there are) sixteen Extreme Hells for each (of the eight Great Hells), making up hundred-and-twenty-eight, and (then together with) the eight Great Hells (they are) hundred-and-thirty-six.
<i>Kadariyatāpanāti sabbete kadariyānaṃ tāpanā</i> .	The Roasting (Hell) of Stinginess (means) it roasts all those who (were) stingy (in their previous life).
<i>Balavadukkhatāya ghorā</i> .	It is "coarse" by the strong suffering (there).
<i>Kammanibbattānaṃ accīnaṃ atthitāya accimanto</i> .	Because of the flames that arise because of the (hell-beings' previous) <i>kamma</i> , they are "flaming".
<i>Bhayassa mahantatāya mahabbhayā</i> .	Because of the greatness of fear, (the hells) are "of great fear".
<i>Diṭṭhamattā vā sutamattā vā lomāni haṃsantīti lomahaṃsanarūpā ca</i> .	Because (these hells), when they are seen or heard, cause hair stand (on end), (they are) "of hair-standing appearance".
<i>Bhīsanatāya bhesmā</i> .	Because (the hells) are horrible, (they are) "terrible".
<i>Bhayajananatāya paṭibhayā</i> .	Because (they) arouse fear, (they are) "dreadful".
<i>Sukhābhāvena dukhā</i> .	Because there is no pleasure, (the hells are) suffering.
<i>Catukkaṇṇāti sabbepi caturassamañjūsasadisā</i> .	"Rectangular" (means) that all (the hells) are indeed like four-cornered boxes.
<i>Vibhattāti catudvārasena vibhattā</i> .	"Divided" (means that the hells) are divided by four doors.
<i>Bhāgasō mitāti dvāravithīnaṃ vasena koṭṭhāse ṭhapetvā mitā</i> .	"Measured by portion" (means that the hells) are measured keeping portions (connected) by door-ways.
<i>Ayasā paṭikujjitāti sabbepi navayojanikena ayakapālena paṭicchannā</i> .	"Enclosed in iron" (means) that all are covered by a nine- yojana iron protection.
<i>Phuṭā tiṭṭhantīti sabbepi ettakaṃ ṭhānaṃ anupharitvā tiṭṭhanti</i> .	"Stay pervaded" (means) that all (the hell-beings) stay pervading that much of space.
<i>Uddhampādā avamsirāti evaṃ tesu tesu nirayesu samparivattitvā punappunaṃ patamāne sandhāyāha</i> .	"Heels upward, head down" (means) that this was said (because) thus in each of those hells (the hell-beings) fall down turned upside-down.

⁴¹ I.e. these few words were added during a Buddhist council, after the Buddha passed away.

<i>Ativattāroti pharusavācāhi atikkamitvā vattāro.</i>	"Speech transgressor" (means) a speaker (who) transgresses by harsh speech.
<i>Mahānirāyesu kira yebhuyyena dhammikasamaṇabrāhmaṇesu katāparādhāva paccanti, tasmā evamāha.</i>	Indeed, (those who) insult correctly (living) ascetics (/monks) (and) brahmins, naturally get cooked in the Great Hells. Therefore it was said so.
<i>Te bhūnahunoti te isīnaṃ ativattāro attano vuḍḍhiyā hatattā bhūnahuno koṭṭhāsakatā macchā viya paccanti.</i>	"They (who) Hindered Success" (means) that they (i.e. the hell-beings in their previous lives), transgressing in speech (when speaking) with ascetics, disturbed (/ "killed") success (of the ascetics), hence (they, being) hinderers of success, are cut (/ "made") in pieces and cooked like fish (in hell).
<i>Asarikheyyeti gaṇetum asakkuṇeyye.</i>	"Uncountable (time)" (means in time) that cannot be counted.
<i>Kibbisakārinoti dāruṇakammakārino.</i>	"The wrongdoers" means those who committed cruel acts.

In the modern Theravada Buddhist books about hell we learn that there are five *ussadaniraya* ("Extreme Hell", or "Hell of Abundance"). I suppose that these five are together counted as one chamber of *ussadaniraya*, and there would be four x four chambers like that to make the sixteen, as mentioned in the translation.⁴² According to Sarpe Yay-yint Sartee Phwet, it is possible to count the Extreme Hells as four (removing the last), and thus we get four Extreme hells by every of the four world directions from each of the Great Hells. This way we have four x four x eight, making up 128. Or it is possible to take all five, which would make up four x five x eight, i.e. 160.

The five kinds of Extreme Hell are:⁴³

1. *Gūthaniraya* / *Mīlhaniraya* (Hell of Excrement) – the beings there are sunk and drowned in excrement, where needle-shaped worms pierce their bodies. The misdeed for this hell was especially avarice and envy of (esp. virtuous) persons' gain (*lābhamacchariya*).
2. *Kukkuḷaniraya* (Hell of Ember, Hell of Hot Ashes) – there they are cooked in hot ember (or hot ash) like mustard seeds. It is because of avarice and envy of righteousness (*dhammamacchariya*).
3. *Simbalivana* / *Sippalivana* (Hell of Silk-Cotton Trees) – Here the hell-beings are forced by the hell-wardens to climb coniferous trees with long, sharp, and burning blazing thorns which pierce and tear their flesh. Another interpretation coming from ven. Amaro, is that there is also "*Lohasimbāli Niraya*", where

"men and women who have deceived their spouses are placed with their beloved, one at the bottom and one at the top of a kapok tree, covered with knife-like spines. Seeing the object of their desires at top of the tree, they are irresistibly compelled to climb, despite the tremendous agony. Once they reach the top, however – BOOF! – the positions change, and the other is suddenly at the base of the tree, feeling compelled to climb..."

⁴² Ashin Nandobhasa in his "*Rhetoric Criticism of Sutta Nipata*", p.162 however believes that "there is no evidence that which and why the one is omitted of these five obviously", apparently thinking that each of the five (or supposedly four) have their separate chamber. From the translation that I have made above it rather seems, that each chamber has five parts, and each part would be represented by one of the hells: *gūtha*, *kukkuḷa*, *sippalivana*, *asipattavana*; or by the *vetaraṇī* river.

⁴³ The explanations below follow *MN 130. Devadūta Sutta* and *Sn 3.10. Kokālika Sutta*, but some details may be added from Commentaries or from later scriptures. They are inspired by "*Buddhism Course*", Chan Khoon San, Malaysia, 2006; p.99.

4. *Asipattavana* (Sword-Leafed Forest) – The leaves there are blown off by the wind and cut of limbs of the hell-beings, their ears, and noses.

5. *Vetaraṇi* / *Vettaraṇi* (River of Caustic/Acid Water) – The hell-beings are swept in this river, and when they are pulled out by the hell-wardens, their mouth is opened wide opened by red-hot tongs, so that a red-hot iron ball can be inserted into the throat. It will then burn all the digestive tract, taking the intestines with it away. The thirst of these hell-beings is quenched by molten copper... The hell-beings are here for their false speech (telling lies).

According to ven. S. Upatissaw, there are four giant kinds of animals in these "Extreme Hells" who attack the hell-beings whenever they see them – giant vultures, giant crows, giant hawks, and giant dogs.

There is one more hell, namely "*Lokantarika Hell*", the hell at the edge of the world.⁴⁴ The beings there fall from the world's edge to the freezing waters underneath the world's crust, in extreme darkness, living totally without light. The evil actions that lead to the rebirth in this world are insolent, disrespectful, and disobedient behavior to one's parents, not asking one's parents for forgiveness. Also, wrong accusation against good persons, insulting them; as well as daily killing and torturing living beings, and bad behavior are also reasons for birth in this hell.⁴⁵ The beings born there have the appearance of bats, of long nails on fingers and toes, hanging from the world-edge's wall, very hungry. As it is so dark there, when they come into contact one with another, they think they encountered some food, so they try to bite and eat one another. At that moment they loose their grip to the wall and fall down into the freezing water below. There their bodies disintegrate and they reappear again hanging from the wall.

Other hells, such as *Lohakumbhī*,⁴⁶ *Simbalīne*, *Ābinaja*, *Bhambodaka*, *Ayoguṭṭha*, *Selapabbata*, *Kusanadī*, *Sītanadī*, *Sunakha*, and *Yantapāsakā* are mentioned by Sarpe Yay-yint Sartee Phwet, but without any further information.

I have added Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of Devadūta Sutta (from Majjhima Nikāya) as well as Kokālika Sutta (from Aṅguttara Nikāya) at the end for more information. See also the sources for the information here below.

⁴⁴ I have been asking a number of knowledgeable persons about the edge of the world, the center of the world, and other characteristics of the flat-world system of Buddhist scriptures. Most commonly I hear the explanation that these features of the world are known by psychic powers, invisible to ordinary humans. Unfortunately, I have not found out any explanation which could clarify the today's experience as well as mathematical proof of the world as spherical, and intelligibly combine the two concepts into one. For the time being it seems most intelligent to take those "flat-world" indications of the Buddha as didactic, rather than factual; and the hells etc. as invisible, independent on the reality visible by us.

⁴⁵ Note that the reasons mentioned are not very specific, which is very natural, because it is very difficult to specify actions leading to each hell. The realms of hells are experienced by the hell-beings due to variety of bad actions, and the birth in them is often times the consequence of a mixture of different actions of different intensities.

⁴⁶ According to the "*Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*", "it is like a cauldron filled up to the brim with molten metal". The Pāli Commentary to *Petavatthu* discourse 15. *Seṭṭhiputtapetavatthu* explains that the beings there are thirty thousand years under the surface (of the molten metal), and then another thirty thousand years they have their face above the surface (of the molten metal). Thus they stay there sixty thousand years.

Sources and Further Reading

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Devadaha Sutta translation by ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi⁴⁷

The Divine Messengers

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapindika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:
 2. "Bhikkhus, suppose there were two houses with doors and a man with good sight standing there between them saw people going in and coming out and passing to and fro. So too, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I see beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. I understand how beings pass on according to their actions thus: 'These worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not revilers of noble ones, right in their views, giving effect to right views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. Or these worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not revilers of noble ones, right in their views, giving effect to right views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared among human beings. But these worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, revilers of noble ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong views in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in the realm of ghosts. Or these worthy beings who were ill conducted...on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in the animal world. Or these worthy beings who were ill conducted ...on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.'
 3. "Now the wardens of hell seize such a being by the arms and present him to King Yama, saying: 'Sire, this man has ill-treated his mother, ill-treated his father, ill-treated recluses, ill-treated brahmins; he has had no respect for the elders of his clan. Let the king order his punishment.'
 4. "Then King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the first divine messenger: 'Good man, did you not see the first divine messenger to appear in the world?' He says: 'I did not, venerable sir.' Then King Yama says: 'Good man, have you never seen in the world a young tender infant lying prone, fouled in his own excrement and urine?' He says: 'I have, venerable sir.'
 - "Then King Yama says: 'Good man, did it never occur to you—an intelligent and mature man—"I too am subject to birth, I am not exempt from birth: surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind"? He says: 'I was unable, venerable sir, I was negligent.' Then King Yama says: 'Good man, through negligence you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your negligence. But this evil action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, [180] or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by recluses and brahmins, or by gods: this evil action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.'
 5. "Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the first divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the second divine messenger: 'Good man, did you not see the second divine messenger to appear in the world?' He says: 'I did not, venerable sir.' Then King Yama says: 'Good man, have you never seen in the world a man—or a woman—at eighty, ninety, or a hundred years, aged,

⁴⁷ *"The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha"*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2009 pp.1029-1036.
(I have removed the footnotes to encourage the reader to by the original book.)

as crooked as a roof bracket, doubled up, supported by a walking stick, tottering, frail, youth gone, teeth broken, grey-haired, scanty-haired, bald, wrinkled, with limbs all blotchy?’ He says: ‘I have, venerable sir.’

“Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, did it never occur to you—an intelligent and mature man—“I too am subject to ageing, I am not exempt from ageing: surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind”?’ He says: ‘I was unable, venerable sir, I was negligent.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, through negligence you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your negligence. But this evil action of yours was not done by your mother...or by gods: this evil action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.’

6. “Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the second divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the third divine messenger: [181] ‘Good man, did you not see the third divine messenger to appear in the world?’ He says: ‘I did not, venerable sir.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, have you never seen in the world a man—or a woman—afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill, lying fouled in his own excrement and urine, lifted up by some and set down by others?’ He says: ‘I have, venerable sir.’

“Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, did it never occur to you—an intelligent and mature man—“I too am subject to sickness, I am not exempt from sickness: surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind”?’ He says: ‘I was unable, venerable sir, I was negligent.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, through negligence you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your negligence. But this evil action of yours was not done by your mother...or by gods: this evil action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.’

7. “Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the third divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the fourth divine messenger: ‘Good man, did you not see the fourth divine messenger to appear in the world?’ He says: ‘I did not, venerable sir.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, have you never seen in the world, when a robber culprit is caught, kings having many kinds of tortures inflicted on him: having him flogged with whips...(as Sutta 129, §4)...and having his head cut off with a sword?’ He says: ‘I have, venerable sir.’

“Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, did it never occur to you—an intelligent and mature man —“Those who do evil actions have such tortures of various kinds inflicted on them here and now; so what in the hereafter? Surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind”?’ He says: ‘I was unable, venerable sir, I was negligent.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, through negligence you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your negligence. But this evil action of yours was not done by your mother...or by gods: this evil action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.’

8. “Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the fourth divine messenger, King Yama presses and questions and cross-questions him about the fifth divine messenger: ‘Good man, did you not see the fifth divine messenger to appear in the world?’ He says: ‘I did not, venerable sir.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, have you never seen in the world a man —or a woman—one-day dead, two-days dead, three-days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing with matter?’ He says: ‘I have, venerable sir.’

“Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, did it never occur to you—an intelligent and mature man—“I too am subject to death, I am not exempt from death: surely I had better do good by body, speech, and mind”?’ He says: ‘I was unable, venerable sir, I was negligent.’ Then King Yama says: ‘Good man, through negligence you have failed to do good by body, speech, and mind. Certainly they will deal with you according to your negligence. But

this evil action of yours was not done by your mother...or by gods: this evil action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience its result.'

9. "Then, after pressing and questioning and cross-questioning him about the fifth divine messenger, King Yama is silent.

10. "Now the wardens of hell [183] torture him with the fivefold transfixing.¹²⁰⁸ They drive a red-hot iron stake through one hand, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the other hand, they drive a red-hot iron stake through one foot, they drive a red-hot iron stake through the other foot, they drive a red-hot iron stake in the middle through his breast. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

11. "Next the wardens of hell throw him down and pare him with axes. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

12. "Next the wardens of hell set him with his feet up and his head down and pare him with adzes. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

13. "Next the wardens of hell harness him to a chariot and drive him back and forth across ground that is burning, blazing, and glowing. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

14. "Next the wardens of hell make him climb up and down a great mound of coals that are burning, blazing, and glowing. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

15. "Next the wardens of hell take him feet up and head down and plunge him into a red-hot metal cauldron that is burning, blazing, and glowing. He is cooked there in a swirl of froth. And as he is being cooked there in a swirl of froth, he is swept now up, now down, and now across. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

16. "Next the wardens of hell throw him into the Great Hell. Now as to that Great Hell, bhikkhus:

It has four corners and is built
With four doors, one set in each side,
Walled up with iron all around
And shut in with an iron roof.
Its floor as well is made of iron
And heated till it glows with fire.
The range is a full hundred leagues
Which it covers all-pervasively.

17. "Now the flames that surge out from the Great Hell's eastern wall dash against its western wall. The flames that surge out from its western wall dash against [184] its eastern wall. The flames that surge out from its northern wall dash against its southern wall. The flames that surge out from its southern wall dash against its northern wall. The flames that dash out from the bottom dash against the top. And the flames that surge out

from the top dash against the bottom. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

18. "Some time or other, bhikkhus, at the end of a long period, there comes an occasion when the Great Hell's eastern door is opened. He runs towards it, treading quickly. As he does so, his outer skin burns, his inner skin burns, his flesh burns, his sinews burn, his bones turn to smoke; and it is the same when his foot is uplifted. When at long last he reaches the door, then it is shut. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

"Some time or other, at the end of a long period, there comes an occasion when the Great Hell's western door is opened... when its northern door is opened...when its southern door is opened. He runs towards it, treading quickly...When at long last he reaches the door, then it is shut. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

19. "Some time or other, bhikkhus, at the end of a long period, there comes an occasion when the Great Hell's eastern door is opened. He runs towards it, treading quickly. As he does so, his outer skin burns, his inner skin burns, his flesh burns, his sinews burn, his bones turn to smoke; and it is the same when his foot is uplifted. He comes out by that door.

20. "Immediately next to the Great Hell [185] is the vast Hell of Excrement. He falls into that. In that Hell of Excrement needle-mouthed creatures bore through his outer skin and bore through his inner skin and bore through his flesh and bore through his sinews and bore through his bones and devour his marrow. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

21. "Immediately next to the Hell of Excrement is the vast Hell of Hot Embers. He falls into that. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

22. "Immediately next to the Hell of Hot Embers is the vast Wood of Simbali Trees, a league high, bristling with thorns sixteen finger-breadths long, burning, blazing, and glowing. They make him climb up and down those trees. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

23. "Immediately next to the Wood of Simbali Trees is a vast Wood of Sword-leaf Trees. He goes into that. The leaves, stirred by the wind, cut his hands and cut his feet and cut his hands and feet; they cut his ears and cut his nose and cut his ears and nose. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

24. "Immediately next to the Wood of Sword-leaf Trees is a great river of caustic water. He falls into that. There he is swept along the stream and against the stream and both along and against the stream. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

25. "Next the wardens of hell pull him out with a hook, and setting him on the ground, they ask him: 'Good man, what do you want?' He says: 'I am hungry, venerable sirs.' Then the wardens of hell prise open his mouth with red-hot iron tongs, burning, blazing, and glowing, and they throw into his mouth a red-hot metal ball, burning, blazing, and glowing. It burns his lips, it burns his mouth, it burns his throat, it burns his stomach, and it passes out below carrying with it his intestines and mesentery. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

26. "Next the wardens of hell ask him: 'Good man, what do you want?' He says: 'I am thirsty, venerable sirs.' Then the wardens of hell prise open his mouth with red-hot iron tongs, burning, blazing, and glowing, and they pour into his mouth molten copper, burning, blazing, and glowing. It burns his lips, it burns his mouth, it burns his throat, it burns his stomach, and it passes out below carrying with it his intestines and mesentery. There he feels painful, racking, piercing feelings. Yet he does not die so long as that evil action has not exhausted its result.

27. "Then the wardens of hell throw him back again into the Great Hell.

28. "It has happened that King Yama thought: 'Those in the world who do evil unwholesome actions indeed have all these many kinds of tortures inflicted on them. Oh, that I might attain the human state, that a Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, might appear in the world, that I might wait on that Blessed One, that the Blessed One might teach me the Dhamma, and that I might come to understand that Blessed One's Dhamma!'

29. "Bhikkhus, I tell you this not as something I heard from another recluse or brahmin. I tell you this as something that I have actually known, seen, and discovered by myself." [187]

30. That is what the Blessed One said. When the Sublime One had said that, the Teacher said further:

"Though warned by the divine messengers,
Full many are the negligent,
And people may sorrow long indeed
Once gone down to the lower world.
But when by the divine messengers
Good people here in this life are warned,
They do not dwell in negligence
But practise well the noble Dhamma.
Clinging they look upon with fear
For it produces birth and death;
And by not clinging they are freed
In the destruction of birth and death.
They dwell in bliss for they are safe
And reach Nibbāna here and now.
They are beyond all fear and hate;
They have escaped all suffering."

Kokālika Sutta translation by ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi⁴⁸

Then the bhikkhu Kokālika approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said: "Bhante, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have evil desires and have come under the control of evil desires." [The Blessed One replied:] "Do not say so, Kokālika! Do not say so, Kokālika! Place confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, Kokālika. Sāriputta and Moggallāna are well behaved."

A second time the bhikkhu Kokālika said to the Blessed One: "Bhante, although I consider the Blessed One worthy of faith and trust, [I still say that] Sāriputta and Moggallāna have evil desires and have come under the control of evil desires." "Do not say so, Kokālika! ... Sāriputta and Moggallāna are well behaved."

A third time the bhikkhu Kokālika said to the Blessed One: "Bhante, although I consider the Blessed One worthy of faith and trust, [I still say that] Sāriputta and Moggallāna have evil desires and have come under the control of evil desires." "Do not say so, Kokālika! Do not say so, Kokālika! Place confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, Kokālika. Sāriputta and Moggallāna are well behaved."

Then the bhikkhu Kokālika rose from his seat, paid homage to the Blessed One, circumambulated the Blessed One keeping the right side toward him, and departed. Not long after the bhikkhu Kokālika had left, his entire body became covered with boils the size of mustard seeds. These then grew to the size of mung beans; then to the size of chick peas; then to the size of jujube pits; then to the size of jujube fruits; then to the size of myrobalans; then to the size of unripe bell fruits; then to the size of ripe bell fruits. When they had grown to the size of ripe bell fruits, they burst open, exuding pus and blood. He then just lay on banana leaves like a fish that had swallowed poison.

Then the independent brahma Tudu⁴⁹ approached the bhikkhu Kokālika, stood in the air, and said to him: "Place confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, Kokālika. Sāriputta and Moggallāna are well behaved."

"Who are you, friend?"

"I am the independent brahma Tudu."

"Didn't the Blessed One declare you to be a non-returner, friend? Then why have you come back here? See how much wrong you have done."⁵⁰

Then the independent brahma Tudu addressed the bhikkhu Kokālika in verse:

"When a person has taken birth
an axe⁵¹ is born in side his mouth
with which the fool cuts himself
by uttering wrongful speech.

⁴⁸ *"The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha"*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2012, pp.1452-1455. This *sutta* appears in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 10.2.4.9. *Kokālika Sutta* as well as in *Suttanipāṭa* 3.10. *Kokālika Sutta*.

⁴⁹ This is a Brahma, a deity (god) of the highest spheres in the Buddhist Cosmology.

⁵⁰ A Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*) is the third (of four) stage of Enlightenment, which if attained, will ensure that the meditator is born in one of the Brahma worlds, namely *Suddhāvāsā*. The "non-return" here means, that the meditator will never be born in human realm again, although he (note that apart from the first Brahma world out of 20, all are gender-less) can appear in the human world by psychic powers for the time he wishes. Kokālika apparently didn't realize this and rebuked the Brahma. It is the more interesting because the Brahma had third stage of Enlightenment, whereas Kokālika had none.

⁵¹ Obviously, this is a metaphore for the tongue.

"He who praises one deserving blame
or blames one deserving praise
casts with his mouth an unlucky throw
by which he finds no happiness.

"Slight is the unlucky throw at dice
that results in the loss of one's wealth,
[the loss] of all, oneself included;
much worse is this unlucky throw
of harboring hate against the holy ones.

"For a hundred thousand
and thirty-six nirabbudas, plus five abbudas,
the slanderer of noble ones goes to hell,
having defamed them with evil speech and mind."

Then the bhikkhu Kokālika died on account of that illness, and because of his resentment against Sāriputta and Moggallāna, after death he was reborn in the red-lotus hell. Then, when the night had advanced, Brahma Sahampati, of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta's Grove, approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, stood to one side, and said to him: "Bhante, the bhikkhu Kokālika has died, and because of his resentment against Sāriputta and Moggallāna, after death he has been reborn in the red-lotus⁵² hell." This is what Brahma Sahampati said. He then paid homage to the Blessed One, circumambulated him keeping the right side toward him, and disappeared right there.

Then, when the night had passed, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus: "Bhikkhus, last night, when the night had advanced, Brahma Sahampati approached me and said to me . . . [as above] ... He then paid homage to me, circumambulated me keeping the right side toward me, and disappeared right there."

When this was said, a certain bhikkhu said to the Blessed One: "How long, Bhante, is the life span in the red-lotus hell?" "The life span in the red-lotus hell is long, bhikkhu. It is not easy to count it and say it is so many years, or so many hundreds of years, or so many thousands of years, or so many hundreds of thousands of years."

"Then is it possible, Bhante, to give a simile?"

"It is, bhikkhu," the Blessed One said. "Suppose there was a Kosalan cartload of twenty measures of sesamum seed. At the end of every hundred years a man would remove one seed from it. In this manner the Kosalan cartload of twenty measures of sesamum seed might be depleted and eliminated more quickly than (1) a life in a single *abbuda* hell would go by. (2) One life in the *nirabbuda* hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the *abbuda* hell; (3) one life in the *ababa* hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the *nirabbuda* hell; (4) one life in the *ahaha* hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the *ababa* hell; (5) one life in the *aṭaṭa* hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the *ahaha* hell; (6) one life in the water-lily hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the *aṭaṭa* hell; (7) one life in the sweet-fragrance hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the water-lily hell; (8) one life in the blue-lotus hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the sweet-fragrance hell; (9) one life in the white-lotus hell is the equivalent of twenty lives in the blue-lotus hell; and (10) one life in the red-lotus hell is the equivalent of

⁵² Red-lotus hell (*Paduma Niraya*) is understood as a very long period of hell, rather than a separate kind of hell. The kind of hell where Kokālika is believed to be born is the Gapless Hell, *Avīci*.

twenty lives in the white-lotus hell. Now, because he harbored resentment against Sāriputta and Moggallāna, the bhikkhu Kokālika has been reborn in the red-lotus hell."

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, further said this:
[The four verses are identical with those just above.]

May all beings be happy and healthy ☺

Monk Saraṇa